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Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

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From The Minister of State

17 March 1995

Your Ref: GP/PG

Gregory Pope Esq MP
House of Commons
LONDON
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Dear Gregory.

Thank you for your letter of 13 March about the establishment of a UN presence in East Timor.

We have taken note of your views on the need for some form of permanent UN presence in East Timor. This could have implications for international recognition of Indonesia's annexation of the territory and would need to be handled with great care. There is no doubt that the establishment of a UN presence would also require the full cooperation of the Indonesian government. That said, providing these potential problems can be overcome, we would certainly be prepared to consider favourably any such proposal which emerges from the continuing talks between Portugal and Indonesia, under the UN Secretary General's auspices. The next round of talks will be held in May.

We welcome Indonesia's undertaking at this year's session of the UN Commission on Human Rights to invite the High Commissioner for Human Rights to visit East Timor this year. The Commission also called upon the Indonesian authorities to continue their policy of greater access to the territory including visits by human rights and humanitarian organisations and the international media. We believe that the continuing presence of the International Committee of the Red Cross and their regular access to detainees also provides an important means of reassurance to the local community.

Yours,
Alastair

ALASTAIR GOODLAD